

2.2.2 TRANSPORTATION AND OHV ROUTES

Together, BLM system roads and motorized trails; non-BLM roads, including State and county roads; and designated off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas constitute the transportation network for the planning area. This transportation network will be managed consistent with the intent of the NCA legislation, to provide reasonable access to visitors, local residents and property owners. (Appendix C contains road and motorized trail classifications and maintenance levels.)

The BLM transportation network in the planning area includes two types of motorized vehicle routes, system roads and motorized trails, and will be managed to provide administrative and public access at the minimum levels required to prevent resource damage and provide safe access.

BLM system roads form the backbone of the transportation system and are regularly maintained. System roads are further subdivided into functional classes depending on intended use. Definitions of the functional classes are included in Appendix C.

All other motorized vehicle routes within the planning area are classified as motorized trails. Motorized trails are low standard vehicle routes that are maintained infrequently and locally in order to retain vehicular access.

Objective

To provide a transportation network for effective access, consistent with the NCA Act, public safety and resource objectives.

Transportation Management

TRAN-1: BLM system roads will be managed to provide primary access to the planning area consistent with the functional and maintenance classifications shown in Table 2-2 and Maps 2-2a – 2-2g.

Table 2-2. BLM System Roads (Proposed RMP)

Road Number	Road Name	Maintenance Level
Collector Roads		
2048	High Road	4
2049	Sulphur-Jackson	3
Resource Roads		
2094	Playa Access	4
37017	Stevens Camp	3
new	Playa Access associated with rail crossing	4
	Two existing Playa Access roads	4

TRAN-2: All other roads and vehicle trails considered BLM system or county roads will be managed as motorized trails and maintained as necessary to provide existing access consistent with trail maintenance level 2

TRAN-3: Maintenance of BLM roads and motorized trails will occur in a manner that minimizes disturbance of resources and visual setting.

TRAN-4: New roads or trails may be developed when consistent with the intent of the NCA Act.

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TRAN-5: One new playa access road and associated rail crossing between Sulphur and Gerlach will be developed and managed as a BLM system road to provide public access to the playa while meeting applicable rail crossing standards (Table 2-2). . Additional sites may be developed to provide public access to the playa or the emigrant trail corridor consistent with future access needs.

Note: Due to safety concerns associated with public use of rail crossings, the railroad has determined that none of the existing crossings between Sulphur and Gerlach can be managed for public use. Existing locations that cannot be managed safely or economically will be closed. There will be an interim period during which not all the existing crossings will be closed while the new crossing is being completed

TRAN-6: BLM will pursue agreements or other means to provide all weather access on the Pershing County portion of Soldier Meadows Road consistent with standards of the Humboldt County portion of the road. If Pershing County relinquishes the road, BLM will add the road to its transportation system as a Collector road, maintenance level 4, as shown on Map 2-2d.

TRAN-7: Wilderness access routes and routes defining wilderness boundaries that are designated as motorized trails (343 miles as shown on Map 2-2g) would be maintained in accordance with motorized trail maintenance level 2 to provide continued vehicle access consistent with their conditions at the time of wilderness designation. Any change in the functional or maintenance classification of these motorized trails will require an amendment to this plan.

TRAN-8: Except as noted in TRAN-7, functional classification or maintenance levels of BLM system roads or motorized trails may be changed following an evaluation of vehicle use and resource issues.

Note: The evaluation may conclude (1) that the road should be either upgraded or downgraded in functional classification or maintenance level; (2) that other measures may be implemented that will resolve resource or safety issues; (3) that the road could be closed either temporarily, seasonally or permanently; or (4) that no change in management will occur.

TRAN-9: Where public roads cross private property, BLM will acquire public access easements or develop road alignments to avoid the private property following a route analysis process that includes appropriate environmental analysis.

TRAN-10: Public access on the east side of the Black Rock Range from Humboldt County Road 214 will be managed to provide north-south access to Black Rock Point and east-west access to the Soldier Meadows area. Map 2-2a shows the evaluation area for this access.

TRAN-11: Vehicles will be allowed to pull off to the sides of existing roads and motorized trails for distances up to 50 feet from road edges where minimal damage is done to vegetation and new parallel roads are not created.

Note: This will accommodate parking, passage of vehicles on narrow roads and camping.

TRAN-12: Temporary closures of playa access points may be implemented to provide for recovery of vehicle ruts.

Note: The Cultural Resources, Special Designations and Wilderness sections of the RMP contain additional decisions that affect operation of the transportation system.

Transportation Signage

SIGN-1: Directional signs will be used where needed to prevent resource damage or known safety concerns. Needs will be determined based upon historic locations, public surveys and other monitoring.

SIGN-2: Sign locations, information content and installation specifications will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that directional signs are the minimum needed to meet the intent of the NCA legislation.

SIGN-3: Alternative methods of providing location and directional information that will either supplement or replace traditional signing will be evaluated and implemented consistent with the intent of the legislation.

OHV Designations

OHV-1: OHV areas will be designated as open, closed or limited to designated routes as shown in Table 2-3 and on Map 2-2a. Wilderness Areas will remain closed to vehicle use. The flat, barren portion of the west arm of the Black Rock Desert playa will be open to vehicle use. Vehicle use, including OHV use, in the remainder of the planning area will be limited to the designated roads and motorized trails.

Table 2-3 OHV Area Designations

Designation	Acres
Closed to OHV use--Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas	751,894
Open to OHV use--Black Rock Desert playa	104,775
Limited to OHV use on designated roads and trails	348,371

Implementation

OHV-2: Maps numbered 2-2a through 2-2g show roads and trails specifically designated for motorized use (398 miles). (See also TRAN-8.)

Note: Creation of a Transportation Plan is a priority during RMP implementation. The Transportation Plan will contain the details of how the BLM roads, motorized trails and transportation signage will be managed, including actions associated with road upgrades, maintenance schedules, road relocations, motorized trail closures, and guidelines for additional signage. Preparation of this plan will include opportunities for required consultations and public involvement and will be subject to analysis under NEPA.